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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

MONDAY, JUNE 21, 1943

SUBJECT: "MIND YOUR MOPS." Information from home economists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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Be it ever so humble, there's no telling when it may become valuable and scarce. That has been the way with so many humble household items since war began to make demands on many different materials. Lowly articles like clothes pins and can openers...dish scrapers and steel wool for scouring....many kinds of cooking ware. The very things you never paid much attention to before when you could get new ones any time at small price at the nearest store...often at the 10-cent store...these common, everyday things have now become so precious that you handle them with care.

Even the mop may deserve a place among your much-prized possessions. For mops like so many other household goods seem due for some wartime conservation. Not long ago manufacturers of dry mops met in Washington to discuss how best to simplify the assortment of dry mops they were making....how to cut out mop frills and luxuries, as you might call them, yet still provide Mrs. American Housewife with the essentials for keeping her floors clean.

Probably you never stopped to wonder, as you pushed your mop around the floor, how many different kinds of mops have been on the market. As a matter of fact, mop manufacturers have been providing you with a great variety of colors, sizes, lengths, shapes and finishes in mops. The result has been that among dry mops alone you had a thousand different models to choose from. That was the estimate made earlier this spring....about one thousand different models of dry mops being manufactured at that time. Now, with many mop materials short, mops won't be coming in in so many different varieties...and you will be wise to give

the mops you own the care that will make them last.

The mop has been such a common household tool for so many generations... something every housewife uses...that you would think every woman would know how to care for it. But the sad truth is that mops suffer a lot of maltreatment.

Let's consider the mop you use on the kitchen floor...the "wet mop." Housewives often wonder why their mops so often get a musty or sour smell...in summer especially. The answer is that mops will mildew if you don't keep them clean...dry...aired...and sunned. Many a mop comes out of the dark closet each day just long enough to wipe up the kitchen floor...then goes back, wet and dirty, to stand in a dark corner in a soggy mass. A mop treated that way becomes an ideal growing place for mildew. Darkness...moisture...warmth....and dirt make mildew thrive, you know.

Mops need at least a rinse after each use. Very often they need washing in warm, clean soapsuds...then rinsing in hot water...wringing as dry as possible...shaking out...and hanging in the sun and air to dry. They need to get thoroughly dry. To sweeten a sour mop, add a little washing powder to the soapsuds and wash the mop thoroughly. This time of year it's a good idea to keep your mop hanging in the sunshine on a peg outside the kitchen door. It's handy there. And it gets both sun and air.

When you notice stray ends of yarn hanging below the rest of the mop, trim them off with scissors. It is these stray ends that often splash baseboards when you are mopping.

By the way, keep all mops...wet mops and dry mops....<u>hanging</u> up by the handle rather than standing on the floor.

Now about dry mops. They need washing, too, when they become soiled from dusting the floor. You can't do a good job of cleaning the floor with a dirty mop. You wash a dry mop as you do a wet mop in suds...rinse...wring and shake

...dry in the sun and air...and dry thoroughly.

Some dry mops are treated with an oil mixture to make them "dustless." These mops have the disadvantage of getting dirty more quickly than plain dry mops because the dirt clings to the oil. So they have to have more frequent washing and the washing removes the oil. Of course, you can re-oil them by shaking them in a jar or can in a little of the oil mixture...or letting them stand a few days in a closed jar or can with the oil mixture. One thing to remember about oiled mops is not to use them on waxed floors or on real linoleum. They soften the wax on floors..."rot" the linoleum.

Some wood experts advise "oiling" mops and also dust cloths with liquid wax ...or with a mixture of two-thirds boiled linseed oil and one-third turpentine. (Some of these materials may be hard to get nowadays.)

One more point about dustless mops and dusters. Take care not to let them come in contact with wallpaper because they leave a grease spot on the paper.

You will find directions for the care and use of mops in the bulletin on house cleaning published by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. Send a postcard asking for "House Cleaning," Bulletin No. 1834. As long as the free supply lasts, a copy is yours for the asking.

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